

Message Text

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PARIS FOR AF/W DIRECTOR SMITH

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, NI
SUBJECT: OBASANJO'S CONVERSATION WITH SENATOR CLARK: US/NIGERIAN
RELATIONS (ONE OF FIVE SEPTELS)

1. HEAD OF STATE MAJOR GENERAL OBASANJO ENTERTAINED SENATOR DICK CLARK DECEMBER 10 FOR LUNCH, PRECEDED BY TWO-HOUR DISCUSSION OF CURRENT SOUTHERNAFRICAN SITUATION. OBADANJO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY CHIEF OF STAFF BRIGADIER GENERAL YAR-ADUA, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER GARBA, AMBASSADOR SANU, AMBASSADOR EDREMODA (HEAD OF AMERICA DEPARTMENT) AND AMBASSADOR BALEWA (PROTOCOL CHIEF). SENATOR CLARK WAS ACCOMPANIED BY STAFF AIDE MARIANNE SPIEGEL AND AMBASSADOR EASUM. AMBASSADORS EDREMODA AND BALEWA WERE REPLACED AT LUNCH BY AMBASSADOR JOLAOSO (MEA DEPUTY PERMSEC) AND ADAMU SULEMAN, DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE.

2. OBASANJO HAD OBVIOUSLY PREPARED CAREFULLY FOR THE MEETING, AND

IN FACT DOMINATED IT WITH SLOW-PACED BUT THOROUGH EXPOSITION OF
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NIGERIAN VIEWS ON ANGOLA, ZIMBABWE, SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA, AND

US/NIGERIAN RELATIONS IN GENERAL. NOR OF HIS COLLEAGUES, INCLUDING YAR-ADUA AND GARBA, CONTRIBUTED ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT TO THE CONVERSATIONS. NOR DID OBASANJO SEEM TO BE IN ANY WAY PLAYING TO THEIR FAVOR OR CONCERNED FOR THEIR APPROVAL. HE WAS VERY MUCH THE CONFIDENT COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, AND SO MUCH IN CONTROL OF THE DIALOGUE THAT SENATOR CLARK FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO INSERT HIMSELF. THUS THE MEETING RESULTED IN LESS OF AN INTERCHANGE OF VIEWS THAN SEPARATE AND INTEGRAL PRESENTATIONS OF FMG ATTITUDES ON THE ONEHAND AND SENATOR CLARK'S TRIP CONCLUSIONS ON THE OTHER. SINCE OBASANJO VERY CLEARLY WANTED TO USE THE MEETING TO PUT NIGERIA'S POSITION DIRECTLY ON RECORD WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER, AND SINCE CLARK'S VIEWS DO NOT DIFFER MARKEDLY FROM OBASANJO'S, MEETING BROKE LITTLE NEW GROUND EXCEPT FOR COMMENTS ON ZIMBABWE (SEPTTEL).

3. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF DISCUSSION ON US/NIGERIAN RELATIONS. REPORTS ON DISCUSSION OF OTHER ISSUES FOLLOW BY SEPTELS.

4. OBASANJO BEGAN WITH A PLEA THAT PRESIDENT CARTER NOT DISAPPOINT THE HIGH HOPES OF NIGERIA AND OTHER AFRICAN NATIONS FOR IMPROVED US/AFRICAN RELATIONS UNDER HIS INCOMING ADMINISTRATION. WHEREAS HE WANTED TO DISCUSS THE SPECIFICS OF NIGERIA'S VIEWS AND US POLICY ON EACH OUTSTANDING SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUE, CENTRAL THEME OBASANUM WISHED TO IMPRESS UPON SENATOR CLARK WAS THAT AFRICA MUST NOT BE SEEN BY US AS A BATTLEGROUND FOR IDEOLOGICAL COMPETITION. AFRICA CANNOT BE AN ARENA FOR DISPUTES BETWEEN WORLD POWERS. US MUST DEMONSTRATE IN ITS AFRICAN DEALINGS WHAT IS BEST IN THE US TRADITION, NAMELY, DEVOTION TO IDEALS OF FREEDOM, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND EQUAL RIGHTS. THESE IDEALS MUST BE PURSUED BY THE US IN AFRICA "IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT MAY BE HAPPENING IN THE EAST/WEST CONTEXT." US POLICY TO DATE HAS DOWNGRADED AFRICA TO THE ROLE OF "PAWN IN THE IDEOLOGICAL GAME."

5. OBASANJO CITED US POLICY TOWARD ANGOLA AS A MAJOR CASE IN POINT. AT THE OUTSET NIGERIA AND THE US WERE ON THE SAME TRACK. BUT WHEN SOUTH AFRICANS INVADED, NIGERIA HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO OPT FOR WHOMEVER OPPOSED THEM. AMERICAN IDEOLOGICAL FIXATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BLINDED THE US TO THE DAMAGE ITS SUPPORT OF FNLA AND UNITA INFLECTED ON ITS RELATIONS WITH NIGERIA AND HALF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE OAU. TOO OFTEN AMERICAN ACTIONS HAVE SEEMED TO BE REACTIONS TO EXTRA-AFRICAN

STIMULI, PARTICULARLY THE ALLEGED THREAT OF COMMUNISM. THE US SHOULD NOT FEAR THE ROLE OF COMMUNISM IN AFRICA. AFRICANS ARE INEVITABLY CONDITIONED BY THEIR COLONIAL HERITAGE, AND THUS NEITHER CAN NOR WISH TO LIVE IN ISOLATION FROM THE WESTERN WORLD.

THE US HAD GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRONGER INFLUENCE ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT, AND NIGERIA HOPES THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WILL MOVE QUIIAD TO CAPITALIZE ON THEM.

6. WHILE NIGERIA KNOWS THAT US POLICY MUUT NECESSARILY RESPOND TO CONSIDERATIONS OF US ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC INTEREST, THE INTERESTS OF AFRICANS THEMSELVES MUST BE ACCEPTED AS AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT DETERMINANT OF US POLICIES IN SOUTHER AFRICA. JUST AS NIGERIA RECOGNIZES THE US HAS A GLOBAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE WORLD AND A PARAMOUNT POSITION IN THE AMERICAN HEMISPHERE, NIGERIA EXQECTS THE US TO CONCEDE THAT NIGERIA HAS A SPECIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN AFRICA. "ALLOWANCES MUST BE MADE FOR THIS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP."

7. OBASANJO ENDED THE LUNCH WITH A TOAST ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: QUOTE AFRICA SHOULD BE VIEWED FOR WHAT IT IS, I.E. MANY RACES, MANY CREEDS, AND MANY RELIGIONS WHO ARE NOW TRYING TO PUT BEHIND THEM A DIFFICULT PERIOD OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COLONIALIZATION. AFRICANS WANT TO JOIN TOGETHER WITH FRIENDS OF AFRICA IN A JOINT ENDEAVOR TO ACHIEVE REAL INDEPENDENCE AND MEANINGFUL SOCIAL WELFARE FOR ALL OF OUR PEOPLES. PLEASE TELL MR. CARTER THAT HE CAN COUNT ON NIGERIA'S SUPPORT IN WHAT WE TRYL WILL BE AN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY THAT IS COGNIZANT OF THESE AFRICAN CONCERNS - ANDEYLEASE FELL FREE, SENATOR CLARK, TO CONSULT OR CALL UPON NIGERIA AT ANY TIME." UNQUOTE.
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